



RESOLUTION NO. 2022-1

A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT BY THE POLICY BOARD OF THE SOUTH CENTRAL OKLAHOMA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION (SCORTPO), THE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING SUBSIDIARY OF THE SOUTHERN OKLAHOMA DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (SODA), FOR EXPANSION OF AMTRAK PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE IN OKLAHOMA, KANSAS AND TEXAS

WHEREAS, AMTRAK has released the AMTRAK CONNECTS US plan to grow rail service across America, and

WHEREAS, this 2035 VISION identifies expansion and enhancement of corridor routes that offers economically viable, frequent, reliable and sustainable passenger train service, and,

WHEREAS, the 2035 Vision proposes adding 160 additional communities to the national rail network, and,

WHEREAS, Amtrak currently has the national capabilities and expertise in place to operate these new routes, and,

WHEREAS, Amtrak has identified an Extension of the Heartland Flyer as an economically viable train for a connection with the Southwest Chief at Newton, Kansas, that will improve the performance of the national network, and,

WHEREAS, economic analysis from Kansas University and Texas Transportation Institute have shown that an Extension of the Heartland Flyer would have a positive return on investment and a positive impact on the Oklahoma economy at both the state and local levels, and,

WHEREAS, an Extension of the Heartland Flyer between Oklahoma City and Newton would add the cities of Davis, Edmond, Guthrie, Perry, Ponca City, Arkansas City, Wichita and Newton to the schedule, (according to the Service Development Plan of 2011) and,

WHEREAS, the development of a Northern Flyer train between Fort Worth, Texas and Kansas City, Missouri would qualify as a second round trip frequency for the route, and,

WHEREAS, advance planning, study and development has already been accomplished, and,

WHEREAS, Amtrak has proposed 100% funding for the capital costs required for new corridor development, and,

WHEREAS, Departments of Transportation in Kansas and Oklahoma require evidence of community commitment for passenger rail service improvements, and,

WHEREAS, Amtrak has stated the urgent need in Congressional offices of demonstrated community desire of federally funded passenger rail service to be included in the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act, and,

WHEREAS, the Departments of Transportation of Kansas and Oklahoma are currently updating State Rail Plans, and the Kansas Department of Transportation is updating a Service Development Plan for passenger rail, and, developing a Long Range Transportation Plan, and,

WHEREAS, the Kansas State Senate passed SR 1767 supporting a Heartland Flyer Extension, and a Northern Flyer second frequency, and fully funded maintenance of the Southwest Chief in 2021, and,

WHEREAS, the Kansas State House of Representatives passed HR 6017 supporting a Heartland Flyer Extension, a Northern Flyer second frequency, and fully funded maintenance of the Southwest Chief in 2021, and

WHEREAS, the Oklahoma State Senate and House of Representatives passed HCR 1003 supporting a Heartland Flyer Extension, a Northern Flyer second frequency, and fully funded maintenance of the Southwest Chief in 2021, and

NOW, THEREFORE, IN CONSIDERATION OF THE AFORESTATED PREMISES, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE POLICY BOARD OF THE SOUTH CENTRAL OKLAHOM REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION that;

SECTION ONE: SCORTPO endorses the inclusion of federal funding for the Extension of Amtrak’s Heartland Flyer between Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to Newton, Kansas to be included in the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill.

SECTION TWO: SCORTPO endorses federal funding for the Amtrak Northern Flyer second frequency between Kansas City, Missouri and Fort Worth, Texas to be included in the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill.

SECTION THREE: SCORTPO endorses federal funding for full maintenance of the Southwest Chief to be included in the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill.

SECTION FOUR: SCORTPO urges full Congressional funding and passage of the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill that includes funding for Amtrak’s Vision 2035.

SECTION FIVE: SCORTPO urges the Oklahoma Department of Transportation to form a multi-state planning and development task force specifically for the build-out of this corridor.

SECTION SIX: This Resolution will be in full force and effect from its date of passage by the Policy Board of SCORTPO.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT COPIES OF THIS RESOLUTION SHALL BE SENT TO:

Representative Tom Cole
Senator James Inhofe
Senator James Lankford
Mr. Derrick James, Amtrak Government Affairs – Midwest Region
Mr. Todd Stennis, Amtrak Government Affairs – South Region
Governor of Oklahoma, Kevin Stitt
Governor of Kansas, Laura Kelly
Executive Director, ODOT, Tim Gatz
Secretary of Transportation, Julie Lorenz
US Department of Transportation Secretary, Pete Buttigieg

PASSED AND RESOLVED: By the Policy Board of the South Central Oklahoma

Regional Transportation Planning Organization this 4th day of August, 2021.



Steven C. Mills, Ph.D.
Executive Director, SODA



Ryan Roberts
SODA Transportation Director